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Message Text

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44
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-07

NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-15 L-03 OMB-01 EUR-25 AID-20 PRS-01

DRC-01 /116 W
---------- 105405
R 151028Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY FORT LAMY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6992
INFO AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L FORT LAMY 1544

DEPT PASS DIA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI CD
SUBJECT: STATIONING OF DAO AIRCRAFT AT FORT LAMY

REF: A. STATE 181447; B. TANANARIVE 1288

1. PROPOSAL TO STATION TANANARIVE DAO AIRCRAFT AT FORT LAMY PRESENTS PROBLEMS AND RISKS WITH FEW OFFSETTING BENEFITS, BUT THERE IS A POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION THAT WE CAN MAKE IF DIA CANNOT FIND SOMETHING MORE SUITABLE.

2. LAST NOVEMBER PRESIDENT TOMBALBAYE SET OUT IN A NEW FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION, TRYING, AFTER YEARS OF APPEARANCES OF BEING A FRENCH PUPPET, TO ESTABLISH A NEW SET OF NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS. THE BREAK WITH ISRAEL, RECOGNITION OF THE CPR, RAPPROCHEMENT WITH LIBYA AND INCREASINGLY VIOLENT VERBAL ASSAULTS ON FRANCE, NEO-COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM WERE THE MOST EVIDENT TRAPPINGS OF THE NEW POLICY. ONLY RECENTLY HOWEVER HAS TOMBALBAYE BROUGHT INTO QUESTION THE FUTURE OF FRENCH BASES IN CHAD. RATHER CAUTIOUSLY HE HAS FROM TIME TO TIME INCLUDED REFERENCES TO NEED TO TERMINATE THEM. ALTHOUGH WE KNOW HE REALLY WANTS TO KEEP THEM AND VOCIFERATIONS ARE ENTIRELY IMAGE-MAKING EXERCISES, HE KNOWS HE IS VULNERABLE IN THIRD
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WORLD EYES AND HE IS THEREFORE EXCEPTIONALLY SENSITIVE TO

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QUESTION OF MILITARY BASES.

3. IF THERE WERE ANY CHANCE OF EMBARRASSING TOMBALBAYE IN STATIONING OF SECOND DAO AIRCRAFT HERE I WOULD RECOMMEND CATEGORICALLY AGAINST. IT FOLLOWS THAT CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH IT MIGHT BE STATIONED HERE MUST BE IMPECCABLE. THIS MEANS DROUGHT RELIEF COULD NOT BE JUST COVER STORY: IT WOULD IN FACT BECOME PRIMARY MISSION FOR DURATION OF DEPLOYMENT, AND THIS OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE, WHICH WOULD BE BASIS OUR FORMAL REQUEST TO FONOFF FOR AIRCRAFT AND CREW PRESENCE, WOULD BE MANIFEST IN PLANE'S ACTUAL UYZ FOR DROUGHT RELIEF ACTIVITIES (MOSTLY MOVEMENTS OF EMBASSY, AID AND ACCOMPANIED NON-US DROUGHT PERSONNEL IN COUNTRY).

4. THIS ALSO MEANS TANANARIVE AIRCRAFT COULD STAY IN CHAD ONLY DURING PERIOD OCTOBER 19 TO NOVEMBER 12 WHILE OUR OWN DAO AIRCRAFT IS UNDERGOING ALREADY-SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE IN EUROPE. MAXIMUM ONE- OR TWO-DAY (LITERALLY) OVERLAP ON EACH END COULD BE INCLUDED. AIRCRAFT WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO BE FULLY OPERATIONAL INCLUDING, OF COURSE, PRESENCE OF COMPLETE CREW AND AVAILABILITY FLYING HOURS.

5. I REALIZE THESE CONDITIONS ARE CONFINING, BUT PREDICTABLE REACTION OF PRESIDENT TOMBALBAYE TO ANY EMBARRASSMENT AT BEING CAUGHT PROVIDING REFUGE FOR SOMEBODY ELSE'S EXPELLED IMPERIALIST MILITARY FORCES WOULD BE INVITATION FOR OUR OWN PLANE TO LEAVE. THEREFORE I RECOMMEND THAT IF THESE CONDITIONS ARE TOO ONEROUS, DIA LOOK ELSEWHERE FOR DEPLOYMENT, SINCE IT IS IN NO ONE'S INTEREST TO NEGOTIATE THEIR SUBSTANCE AWAY.
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